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3

Casey and Helms Meet On Criticisms of C.I.A.

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 2 — William J. Casey, the Director of Central Intelligence, met today with Senator Jesse Helms, one of several conservative senators who have been accusing the C.I.A. of a possible "pro-Soviet bias."

In an Oct. 2 letter, Senator Helms, a North Carolina Republican, raised a series of questions about whether the agency analysis of arms control and military issues had been fooled by Soviet deception tactics.

At today's meeting, according to sources familiar with the session, Mr. Casey delivered a written response to the Helms letter.

Senator Helms and Mr. Casey met in private, without their aides. Mr. Helms declined to discuss the session and a spokesman for the agency said Mr. Casey was not available for comment.

Mr. Casey's unusual meeting with a single Senate critic appeared to be the latest instance of a more assertive attitude he has been taking toward Congressional complaints about the agency. Last month, Mr. Casey sharply attacked Senator Dave Durenberger, the chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, for his reported remarks on the C.I.A.'s performance.

Issue of Arms Control Compliance

The charges against the agency come a time when the Reagan Administration is preparing a report on Soviet compliance with past arms control agreements. There is disagreement within the Administration over the nature of some alleged violations and Congressional conservatives like Senator Helms have been pressing the Administration to take a hard-line position.

Senator's Helms's letter referred only to the C.I.A. and did not take account of recent moves by other agencies to lower their estimate of Soviet capabilities.

Senator Helms, the second-ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee, raised 14 questions about the agency in his letter. Each suggests that the agency had purposefully or mistakenly underestimated Soviet capabilities.

In one question, Senator Helms makes several charges about the agency's approach to arms control and then asks: "Are these recent reports correct? Are they best explained by an under-estimative analytical bias, a possible pro-Soviet bias, or all of the above?"

Series of Critical Letters

The Oct. 2 Helms letter was the latest in a series of letters to President Reagan in which conservative senators have criticized the agency's Soviet analyses.

On April 25, Mr. Helms, Steven Symms, Republican of Idaho, and Senator Malcolm Wallop, Republican of Wyoming, argued in a letter to the President that the Soviet Union had

been continuously camouflaging its violations of arms treaties.

A group of eight Republican senators wrote to Mr. Reagan in September of their continuing concerns about the Soviet Union's purported violations of the strategic arms limitation treaty and other arms control treaties.

Each of the senator's letters share the common theme that the Soviet Union is succeeding in fooling American analysts with their deceptive measures. This issue has been hotly contested by various intelligence agencies. One former Administration official termed that argument "a bunch of hogwash."

But Senator Wallop, a former member of the intelligence committee, argues that the Soviet Union had succeeded in fooling the C.I.A. He is a leading proponent of the argument that the agency has been penetrated by a Soviet "mole," or high-level double agent.